



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

NEWS RELEASE

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FAMILY, CHILD WELFARE MEASURES WIN UNANIMOUS SENATE APPROVAL

*Baucus supported reauthorization of Safe & Stable Families and Child Welfare Act,
championed new funding to fight methamphetamine epidemic*

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.) today applauded the Senate’s unanimous approval of the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 – legislation that reauthorizes and improves the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program and the Child Welfare Services Act through 2011. This legislation was co-sponsored by Baucus and Senators Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) and Orrin Hatch (R-Utah). Baucus is the ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, which oversees the nation’s child welfare programs. The conference report approved by the Senate still awaits House consideration.

“Every child deserves the chance to grow up in a safe and stable home,” said Baucus. **“We need to root out the problems that too often force children into the child welfare system, particularly the growing scourge of methamphetamine abuse. This bill makes some real improvements to our child welfare system, and gets us closer to the goal of a thriving, secure childhood for every American youngster.”**

In response to needs in his own home state, Baucus worked to include \$145 million in competitive grants to address the problem of methamphetamine and substance abuse related to child welfare and foster care. Funding is targeted to regional partnerships that include state agencies, and will be available for family-based, comprehensive, long-term substance abuse treatment, early intervention and preventive services, and other prevention initiatives. Baucus also worked to insure that historically underfunded child welfare programs for Indian tribes received increased monies to help combat new and challenging issues.

The reauthorized Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program will require states to provide additional information on efforts to get children into safe family situations and keep them there. Congress will receive actual spending data on adoption and post-adoption services, efforts to keep families together, and efforts to provide permanent, safe, and loving homes for children.

The bill also supports the training and hiring of more social workers, so that more children in foster care will receive at least monthly visits. It continues the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program, and creates a three-year demonstration program to help provide mentoring services in underserved areas.

Changes to the Child Welfare Service Act will match and enhance the efforts of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program. The bill requires states to achieve the standard of monthly social worker visits for 90 percent of foster children by 2011. This will help ensure proper monitoring of the development of children for whom the state has taken responsibility.

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